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THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING.

The twenty-eighth annual meeting of the Library Association will be held at Cambridge on the 22nd to 24th August, 1905, and bids fair to be an eminently practical and useful Conference. The new President, Mr. Francis Jenkinson, M.A., the University Librarian, will open the proceedings with the usual presidential address and among the subjects to be discussed are Public Education and Public Libraries; Bookbinding and Binderies; Co-operation and Central Cataloguing; and Newsrooms and Sunday Opening. What should prove a very useful feature of the meeting is an exhibition of library appliances, bookbinding and materials, plans and photographs of recent library planning, and the best books of 1904. In connection with the last item classified lists will be prepared and published in the "Library Association Record." We are gratified to learn from the programme that the exhibition of "best books" is being facilitated by the co-operation of the publishers. We could do with more of this sort of thing, and suggest that arrangements might be made by the Library Association to hold a quarterly exhibition at their new headquarters at the London School of Economics. When publishers once realised the value of such an exhibition as an advertising medium, we feel sure that there would be no difficulty in arranging the exhibit, and the boon to librarians would be incalculable.

We strongly advise those assistants who can manage to get away to attend at least some of the meetings. This is the first time since 1897 that the annual meeting has been held so near London, and the opportunity thus afforded to Metropolitan assistants should not be missed. Mr. W. George Chambers, the Chairman of the L.A.A., is arranging for a day excursion on Wednesday, the 23rd August, and will be glad to have, not later than the 12th inst., the names of all wishing to join it. For a party of not less than ten it may be possible to get return railway tickets at a single fare and a quarter (say 6s.), and a larger party would probably get more favourable terms. The programme on Wednesday is a very good one. At the morning session there will be a lantern lecture by Mr. J. Willis Clark, M.A., Litt.D., Registrar of the University, on the "Evolution of the Library"; Mr. Cyril J. Davenport, V.D., F.S.A., will lecture on "Bookbinding and Book Production," illustrated by the lantern; and Mr. Cedric Chivers will deal with Bookbinding from the library point of view. The afternoon Session will be devoted to the subject of "Co-operation and Central Cataloguing," and in the evening the annual business meeting will be held. The attendance of a number of members of the L.A.A. at an annual meeting of the Library Association will be something of an innovation, and it is hoped that as many as possible will place themselves in communication with Mr. Chambers in order that this first attempt may prove successful.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RATING OF LIBRARIES.

By WILLIAM J. HARRIS, Stroud Green Public Library, Hornsey, N.

The anomaly of rating an already rate-supported institution has always appeared to me one of those curious incongruities with which unfortunately the law abounds. Of the legal assessment of buildings used expressly for library purposes, much has been said and written, and there are few if any fresh arguments that can be introduced into this now well-beaten field. The subject has always been a vexed one, and, as recent events have shown, we are now no nearer the realisation of a just, equitable and sound agreement between the various authorities than has been the case in former years. So intangible, indeed, is the point as viewed by the Assessment Committees that it is seldom two judgments are in accord.

The crux of the whole question centres itself in the very unsatisfactory interpretation of the Act of 1843, which reads: "An Act to Exempt from County, Borough, Parochial, and other Local Rates, Lands and Buildings occupied by Scientific or Literary Societies," 6 and 7 Vict., c. 36. Considering that Public Libraries were the natural outcome of the old Mechanics' Institutes, which were exempt from rates, it is natural to claim that Public Libraries, whose administration is certainly upon a higher plane, should be entitled to the same benefit. Unfortunately, all Assessment Committees and Local Authorities are not of the same opinion, and where one authority will allow exemption, another will not. Even the decision of the House of Lords in 1896, which distinctly stated that Public Libraries were entitled to be distinguished as literary societies for the purposes of the Income Tax Act of 1842, has had little effect, and has to a great extent been ignored.

Either a Public Library is a Scientific and Literary Society within the purview of this Act, or it is not. The Act in its present form is not definite enough, and it would stand to the credit of the Library Association if it would take the matter up and endeavour to have the Act amended to include Public Libraries *by name*, for at present its administration is arbitrary and subject to the taste and fancy of the reader. In the discussion of its interpretation, the arguments, both pro and con, used by the various authorities resemble the throes and mental gymnastics indulged by the "higher criticism."

Many of our libraries are burdened with loans of which they will not be clear for years, and under the existing limit of the library rate, these deserving libraries are eking out a struggling existence, so that the exemption from the payment of rates would mean a welcome addition to their book fund.

If argument were required to endorse the statement that definite legislation is required upon this very aggravating question, the recent Liverpool case must give us cause for reflection. This is a case between "the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of the City of Liverpool" v. "the Assessment Committee of the West Derby Union and the Overseers of the Poor of the Township of Wavertree." It is in respect of premises situated in Picton Road, Wavertree, Liverpool, which consist of a Free Library, at £300 gross and £255 net rateable value. An appeal was made against the rate, and judgment was delivered against the Library Authorities on April 18th, 1905. Against this judgment they are appealing, and are asking for support to prosecute an appeal, and in the opinion of Mr. Carver, K.C., they have every chance of success.

Mr. Carver is of opinion that the present case is analagous to the Brockwell Park case, and that it is governed by that decision. It was clearly and conclusively proved that the Library fulfilled all the obligations demanded by the Act of 1843, but the certificate of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, so far as libraries are concerned, appears to have little or no value.

It is difficult to procure up-to-date information as to those libraries which are exempt from rates, but the statistics from Mr. Greenwood's Library Year Book, 1900-1, are interesting. From this source we gather that the number of libraries not exempt from local rates or income tax is 43; not exempt from local rates 25, and not exempt from income tax 25. A note adds that "It may be assumed that all libraries not mentioned are exempted from the payment of local rates and taxes." I believe, however, the numbers to be much in excess of these figures, for since the date of their compilation many new libraries have been established.

Another aspect of the case presents itself. Many libraries have been granted partial exemption, not upon legal grounds, but owing to the fact that their income was limited. Quite recently a case was decided by an Assessment Committee, and the librarian was severely hectorred for presuming to present his case and demand, by legal right, exemption. Ultimately he had to go, cap in hand, pleading poverty as his crime, and upon these grounds, and these only, they graciously allowed a nominal assessment. This, to say the least, is a very unfortunate position to be in, and by no means adds to the dignity of our profession. Legislation, therefore, is needed to meet this undoubtedly unjust demand upon an already limited and altogether inadequate rate.

THE MONASTIC HISTORIANS.

By FREDERIC KENT, Librarian, Anderston District Library, Glasgow.

This paper does not pretend to any great comprehensiveness of scope; lack of sufficient space effectually prevents a representation either adequate or exhaustive. The object in view has been rather to attempt to emphasise the leading characteristics of our greater early historians than to congest a screed of bibliographical facts into an unreadable catalogue.

The work of the monastic historian is not a popular subject of study among library assistants, yet it is a branch of literature not only full of profound and quaint interest, but also one from which the keenest enjoyment and much benefit would accrue. No other country in Europe has so fine a legacy from antiquity in the form of ancient contemporary annals as our own, and the fact that a knowledge of its varied contents may be accumulated by the most easy stages seems to be forgotten in standing before the long brown rows of the Rolls series, vainly speculating what particular form of dreariness may lurk behind the barrier of ancient Latinity.

The production of books in those days must have been a painful and wearisome task. How different was the century that could chronicle the invasion of England in two hundred and fourteen yards of tapestry from the century which produced the process-block, and other infirmities incident to that which, in a moment of exuberant fancy, has been called "the strenuous life." If there ever has been a strenuous life it was during the desperate time of "the youth of the world," when the different peoples of England lived in a sanguinary struggle that ultimately made a nation.

Modern methods of recording history offer a striking contrast to those of the ancient period. The simple brevity of some of the older chroniclers—sometimes so brief that the result was little more than chronology—would not have allowed them to fill their periodical literature—supposing they had any—to surfeit with accounts of wars long since passed away. Modern analysis of motive, with its superabundance of subjective detail, finds no place among the monastic historians. There was no Froude with a passion for dramatic climax produced by the aid of perverted facts; there was no Macaulay dazzling the world with glittering brilliance; neither did there live a denunciatory Carlyle, groping “his way through French or Prussian archives, looking for the devil with a bull’s-eye lantern.”

The element of the miraculous is scattered through most of the early chronicles. To cite a few examples—Gildas, for instance, relates how St. Alban “opened a path across the noble river Thames, whose waters stood, abrupt like precipices on either side,” while the saint and a thousand others passed dry-foot from side to side. Giraldus Cambrensis gravely tells us of a stone in Anglesey resembling a human thigh, which, when carried away from its place, to whatever distance, always returned during the night of its own accord. Even the Venerable Bede, notwithstanding his splendid intellect, tells us, among other incidents of a similar nature, that Germanus stilled a tempest while crossing the Channel, that eyesight was miraculously given to a certain blind girl, and that a fire at Canterbury was quenched by the prayers of Mellitus. Considering the gross superstition of the age, such instances of childlike credulity are scarcely to be wondered at.

The first English historian was Gildas (516?—570?). After the Romans were compelled to leave the land they had ruled for five hundred years the British, unable to govern either their country or themselves, gradually relapsed into barbarism and the degradation of gross immorality. Attacked by the Piets and Scots, they appealed to Rome against the invaders. The Romans responded, and the Piets and Scots were driven back to their mountain fastnesses. Later, another appeal was made, but without result. Dreading annihilation, the British at last invited, according to Gildas, “the fierce and impious Saxons—a race hateful both to God and man, to repel the invasions of the northern nations.” The immediate result was the overthrow of Christianity and civilisation, the revival of Paganism, and a reign of terror lasting for a hundred and fifty years before the country was subdued. Gildas’s “*De excidio Britanniae*” is a picture of the period rather than a history, and shows the degeneracy of the people at the time of the Saxon incursions—“Britain has kings, but they are tyrants; she has judges, but impious ones; often engaged in plunder and rapine, but preying upon the innocent; avenging and protecting, indeed, but only robbers and criminals. . . . They disperse the innocent and the humble, but seize every occasion of exalting to the utmost the bloody-minded, the proud, murderers . . . enemies of God, who ought to be utterly destroyed and their names forgotten.”

The loss of all contemporary manuscripts, and proved interpolations in later ones, tend to render the authority of Gildas questionable, but he remains the solitary recorder of the initial doings of the fierce and warlike race, who, after enduring two conquests, were yet destined to predominate, and to rule and govern, in the land they had ravaged and spoiled.

Although Gildas lived in the sixth century the earliest known manuscripts of his work date from about the end of the twelfth.

The subjugation of England by the Roman Empire in the first century B.C. was an enterprise conceived and carried out in the spirit of

aggrandisement of empire. The triumph of the Empire was to be followed by an ecclesiastical triumph, the eternal city reaping the fruits of victory, her conquest bloodless, yet complete, for the metal helmet of the warrior gave place to the tonsure of the monk; instead of the shouts of contending armies and the groans of dying men, there came the benefits of continental civilisation and the Christian gospel of peace.

The monastic life, brought by St. Augustine to England in 597, was responsible for a revival of learning, and, a little later, the birth of a national literature.

The historian of this period is the Venerable Bede (673-735). Without his "*Historia Ecclesiastica*"—B.C. 60 to A.D. 731—there would be practically no record of early English history. Where we have fact there would be merely conjecture.

The term "ecclesiastical" had not, in those days, the strictly defined limits it has now. It not only included matters relating to the Church, but also the more important events of secular life. Thus it is that Bede's narrative contains much information of a character foreign to the limits suggested by the title.

The great value of Bede's record has been recognised by all who labour among the documents of history. Like Gildas, he is the only authority for his period, although Hume perpetrated the extraordinary blunder of instancing Matthew Paris and Henry of Huntingdon, neither of whom were born until more than three hundred years after Bede's death, as authorities confirming Bede's statements.

Manuscripts of Bede's "*Historia Ecclesiastica*" are preserved in the Public Library, Cambridge, and in the British Museum.

To this period belongs the famous "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," or, as E. A. Freeman insisted on calling it, the "English Chronicles." At first a meagre record of events, it became much more detailed in Alfred's day—by many authorities Alfred is believed to have been responsible for its inauguration—until it developed finally into a connected narrative. "No other nation," says Thorpe, in his edition of the "Chronicle," "can produce any history, written in its own vernacular, at all approaching the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," either in antiquity, truthfulness, or extent, the historical books of the Bible alone excepted."

Six copies of the manuscript are known to exist, of which four are among the Cottonian manuscripts in the British Museum. The dates at which they finish are as follows:—977, 1058, 1066 and 1080. Of the two others, the one in Corpus Christi College Cambridge, ends with the year 1070; while the Bodleian Library copy, which is by far the most extensive, brings early English history down to the death of Stephen, in 1154.

Nearly two hundred years elapsed after Bede's death before another historian of note added further records of the morning-time of English history. It was the period of Alfred the Great, the monarch equally eminent in war, wisdom, government and learning. The latter quality, his learning, is worthy of note, for he was one of possibly three English kings that, either before his day, and certainly for five hundred years after, possessed the accomplishment of reading and writing.

To Asser, a Welshman who died probably in 909, belongs the credit of having written the "Life of Alfred." As a personal friend of the king, and coadjutor in Alfred's efforts to popularise learning, he was rewarded for his fidelity with many ecclesiastical preferments of importance and value.

The only authentic manuscript of Asser's work is a tenth century one, from which the best edition extant was printed in 1722.

There is another manuscript bearing Asser's name: the so-called "Asser's Annals," a record proved to have been written at least eighty years after Asser's death. In it occurs the familiar incident of Alfred's taking refuge with a cowherd and the subsequent burning of the cakes—an interpolation. It is a pity to lose so pretty a story, but, as a student of the period has pointed out, the additions in the spurious manuscript may be the gleanings of oral tradition, and possibly true.

The next production of note following Asser is the "Chronicle of Battle Abbey," the monastery founded by William the Conqueror at Hastings in fulfilment of a vow made before the battle on Senlac Hill. Except for the well-known "Battle Abbey Roll," these chronicles are more ecclesiastical than political.

Florence of Worcester (died 1118) also belongs to this period, but his work, "Chronicon ex Chronicis," was largely a compilation from existing sources, beginning, as many other early chronicles, with the creation of man. It is dry and matter-of-fact, without any of the embellishments that have made history the fascinating study it has become to-day.

The most accomplished historian of early Norman times was probably Eadmer (died 1124), who wrote a history of his own day entitled "Historia novorum, sivi sui sæculi." It is purely ecclesiastical, lacks the element of the miraculous, and shows an unusual elegance of literary style. The manuscript is in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

William of Malmesbury (died 1143) was an accomplished scholar of catholic tastes. His two principal works are "Gesta regum Anglorum" and "Gesta pontificum Anglorum." The "Gesta regum Anglorum" was a valuable contribution to our early history; it ends with the year 1128. A supplement was afterwards added, the "Historia Novella," bringing the narrative down to 1142. It is curious to read that, even in the days of daring deeds, of desperate ventures and of fiercest passions, the time of William of Malmesbury could furnish at least one instance of foppishness worthy of record. There was effeminacy even in the fighting age, when men "vied with each other in length of locks, and, wherever they were defective, put on false tresses."

A large number of manuscripts of William of Malmesbury's work has come down to us, the more important being in the British Museum, and the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

Of the reign of King Stephen there is a separate record, an anonymous fragment of considerable interest and importance. A contemporary manuscript of the "De gesta Stephani" is not extant, but the Stowe manuscript of the twelfth century, the Cottonian and the Bodleian, both of the thirteenth, are considered to be directly derived from it.

Another historian of the reign of King Stephen was Henry of Huntingdon (1084?—1155), whose "Historia Anglorum," as does that of William of Malmesbury, betrays strong evidence of the increase of learning fostered under the hand of Henry Beauclerc, or, Henry the Scholar, who had the temerity—if such an epithet may be used of those days—to observe in his father's hearing that "an illiterate king is a crowned ass."

Henry of Huntingdon was not a monk, and, properly speaking, should not be noticed here, but the man was a writer of unusual merit. It is significant of a more than ordinary intellect that he should have omitted nearly all the fabulous legends recorded by most of his predecessors.

The principal manuscripts of Henry of Huntingdon's work are contained in Hatfield House, the Cambridge Public Library, Durham, the Vatican, and Lambeth.

Richard of Devizes (died 1192) begins his chronicle with the coronation of Richard I. at Westminster. His story opens with a description of the massacre of the Jews in England, a horrible slaughter which began on the coronation day. This was the age of the crusades, and it is not surprising that religious fanaticism, strong enough to lure monarchs from their dominions, should be sufficiently intense to beget a series of bloody persecutions. The spirit of the time represented a violent and unnatural extreme, and Richard of Devizes' work no doubt faithfully portrays the deplorable mental condition of his contemporaries. Writing of the massacre, he says: "On the very day of the coronation, about that solemn hour in which the Son was immolated to the Father, they began, in the City of London, to immolate the Jews to their father, the Devil. . . . The other cities and towns of the kingdom emulated the faith of the Londoners, and, with a like devotion, despatched their bloodsuckers with blood to hell." It is sad to think that these sentiments are those of a Christian monk, but strange deeds done in the name of the Christian religion are by no means uncommon in history.

Richard of Devizes's "*De rebus gestis Ricardi Primi*" contains a detailed account of Cœur de Lion's doings in the third crusade, and, apart from that, the best contemporary description of the internal affairs of England during the turbulent years of the king's absence. Manuscripts of Richard of Devizes are preserved at Cambridge and in the British Museum; they belong to the thirteenth century.

The genius of Thomas Carlyle has made most readers familiar with the name of Jocelin of Brakelond, together with that of Abbot Sampson, of St. Edmundsbury. The chronicle that inspired "*Past and Present*" is a life-like picture of monastic and social life at the end of the twelfth century, a vivid and entertaining record. The only complete manuscript in existence is the Harleian.

Geoffrey of Monmouth (1110—1154) was a Welshman, and a member of the secular clergy. This fascinating personality possessed an intellect compounded of an unrestrained imagination mixed with a genius for its logical expression. He was guilty of perpetrating what is probably the most remarkable, and certainly the most forgivable, literary forgery in English literature. It is perhaps unfair to call him the Louis de Rougemont of the middle ages—he will continue to be remembered, De Rougemont will not—but he had infinitely greater powers of inventing seemingly truthful detail than the inimitable Defoe. It is just to condemn a George Psalmanazar with his description of Formosa, a William Henry Ireland with a "*Vortigern and Rowena*," or a Dr. Charles Julius Bertram and his spurious Richard of Cirencester's "*De sitri Britannia*"; but how can one condemn the most consummate work of art of the English literature of the middle ages? The debt of romantic literature to Geoffrey of Monmouth is so great that he stands exonerated from all blame for his misdemeanour. Although he invented an English history with details as far back, and connected with, the hero of Virgil's epic, Æneas, it will never be forgotten that he enriched English literature with the first collection of the Arthurian legends, and, *inter alia*, the material for "*Lear*" and "*Cymbeline*." Shakespeare used Geoffrey's work through Holinshed. Among others who have used Geoffrey's fictions may be mentioned Milton, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth and Tennyson.

Geoffrey's work was called "*Gesta regum Britannia*"; a large number of manuscripts are in the British Museum.

Giraldus Cambrensis (1146?—1220?) was also a Welshman, as the name implies. Among his writings is an autobiography, "*De rebus a se Gestis*," so that more is known of Gerald the Welshman than is usual among the early historians.

Giraldus became one of Henry II.'s chaplains, and was afterwards preceptor to Prince John, with whom, in 1185, he visited Ireland in the capacity of secretary. The visit furnished material for his "*Topographia Hibernica*," the only vivid picture of Ireland in the middle ages that has come down to us. It is his earliest and most readable book, containing a detailed account of the natural history of the country, its miracles and its people. The "*Topographia*" was publicly read by Giraldus before the University of Oxford in three sections on three successive days, the conclusion of each day's reading being followed by a splendid entertainment provided at the author's expense. Giraldus evidently understood the art of advertisement.

Apart from those already mentioned, the more important works of Giraldus include, "*Expugnatio Hibernica*," "*Itinerarium Cambriae*," and "*Gemma Ecclesiastica*." The writings of Giraldus are particularly valuable for minute portraits of the celebrities of the day. Detailed descriptions of such men as Henry II., Strongbow, and the leaders on either side of the war in Ireland, possess more than a passing interest even after the lapse of seven hundred years.

Among the manuscripts of Giraldus in the British Museum, the autobiography—was egotism unpopular in those days?—is unique. Others are to be found in many of the college libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, Trinity College, Dublin, and in the Vatican.

It is only fitting that mention should be made, however slight, of the separate schools of history which flourished under the shadow of the greater monasteries. After Bede's death, at Durham, for instance, a long succession of chroniclers continued to record the history of Northumbria. Much of the work is anonymous, much unimportant, and most of it very dry, but it is continuous to the days of the Reformation. Both St. Albans and Croyland possessed similar schools. To the chronicles of St. Albans we owe practically all our knowledge of the reign of Henry III.

One of the more noteworthy of the St. Albans school was Roger of Wendover (died 1236), who wrote the "*Flores Historiarum*," a record dating from Adam to his own day. He called it an anthology, but the part beginning at 1202 is a valuable first-hand authority. Only two manuscripts are known to exist: one being in the Bodleian Library and the other among the Cottonian collection.

Roger of Wendover was succeeded at St. Albans by Matthew Paris (died 1259), a far more able man. He was the first historian of his time, his "*Chronica majora*"—to 1253—and "*Historia minor*"—1200 to 1250—remaining lasting monuments of his splendid ability. Possessing a singularly lucid style, and a breadth of view remarkably broad for his day, he could not fail to be interesting in the time of the struggle between King John and his rebellious barons.

The principal manuscripts of the work of Matthew Paris are preserved in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, the British Museum, and the Bodleian.

The writer who followed Matthew Paris as historiographer of St. Albans exhibited an unusual modesty in inscribing a prefatory note to his own share of the chronicle: . . . "What is hereafter added is to be attributed to another brother, who, presuming to take in hand hereafter unworthily to continue the work of so great a predecessor [Matthew

Paris], although he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoe, has not deserved to have his name inscribed upon the page."

The continuation is generally believed to be the work of William Rishanger (1250?—1312?). His labours, "*Chronica et annales*," carried the St. Albans history to 1306. The manuscript is in the British Museum.

Throughout the whole of this period the St. Albans chronicles are by far the most complete and original documents of the age. After Rishanger came John de Trokelowe, Henry de Blanford, and, finally, Thomas Walsingham, who died probably in 1422. Walsingham's work is valuable. It is from him we derive nearly all we know of Wycliffe, Wat Tyler's insurrection, and, generally speaking, an account of the reigns of Richard II. and Henry V. The original manuscripts of his work are among the Cottonian collection of the British Museum.

The day of the monastic historian was now drawing to its close. Only one document, the "*Historiæ Croylandensis continuatio*," reaches beyond the chronicle of Walsingham, dragging on an intermittent existence to the accession of Henry VII.

In the fourteenth century monasticism began to lose its hold upon the people. There were a variety of causes to bring about such a result: lack of discipline, commercial enterprise, the passing of monastic occupations to secular hands, and so on. The monks ceased to have access to the Court, and, in the political uncertainty of the time, the keeping of any record of events, however meagre, seems to have been forgotten.

There is one celebrated chronicle of this period, that of Ranulf Higden, who died in 1364. His "*Polychronicon*" is not an original record, but a compilation, the work of an omnivorous reader. The "*Polychronicon*" differed from all records of the same character; it was a universal history constructed on a scale previously unprecedented in the history of literary enterprise. Higden divided his book into seven parts in imitation, he tells us, of the First Worker, who made everything in six days and rested on the seventh. The "*Polychronicon*" had a great vogue, and was immensely popular. It was reproduced by more than a hundred copyists within a century of its first appearance. The best manuscripts are in many of the libraries of the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

John Trevisa (1326—1412) translated the "*Polychronicon*" into English. In this form the work was rendered still more popular by being issued from the press of Caxton, whose name reminds us that we have entered a new era, the age of printing, by which time, after the labours of a thousand years, the work of the monastic historian was done.

GIFT FROM MR. THOMAS GREENWOOD.

Mr. Thomas Greenwood, who has on many previous occasions given us substantial evidence of his interest and sympathy with the L.A.A., has placed fifty copies of his interesting life of Edward Edwards at the disposal of the Committee. In his letter conveying the gift he says: "I rejoice at the growing influence of your Association, and as some thirty-five years ago I was, for a few years, an assistant in a Public Library and in charge of a branch, I am naturally glad to hear of the progress of your efforts."

LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

CROYDON PUBLIC LIBRARIES: The Reader's Index, Vol. 7, No. 4.—The July-August issue of the bi-monthly magazine of the Croydon Public Libraries is a "Garden" number, and opens with an interesting article by Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers, Sub-Librarian, on "Garden Books." Mr. J. D. Stewart contributes a short reading list on Gardening, and there is the usual annotated list of additions to the Libraries. The "Teacher's Note-book," conducted by Mr. Sayers, is a commendable feature, which should prove of inestimable value to those engaged in the teaching profession.

HEREFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY AND MUSEUM: Thirty-third Annual Report, 1904-5.—Continued progress is recorded. With a stock of 15,154 volumes, 73,831 volumes have been issued during the year, an increase of 5,779. The Book Club is evidently a flourishing concern, as from that department alone 450 volumes were added to the shelves of the Lending Library. A Cotgreave Indicator has been purchased.

MANCHESTER PUBLIC FREE LIBRARIES: Quarterly Record, Vol. 8, No. 4.—Contains a Dewey classified list of books placed in the Reference Library from October to December, 1904, edited by Mr. Ernest Axon; and an article on the Centenary of William Harrison Ainsworth, by Mr. John H. Swann.

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, U.S.A., FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY: Sixteenth Annual Report, 1904.—A very exhaustive report on the work of the library during 1904, well illustrated with views and plans of the exterior and interior of the building, together with eight reduced facsimiles of book-plates now in use in the institution. Out of an estimated population of 290,000, with a collection of 99,718 volumes, 465,714 books have been issued during the year. The net library income for 1904 was 62,798 dollars, out of which over 10,000 dollars were spent in books.

NOTTINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES: Annual Report, 1904-5.—398,514 volumes have been issued during the year, being a daily average of 1,626 volumes, and an increase of 30 per day on the issues of the previous year. The Libraries now contain 113,357 volumes. Several half-hour talks have been given, and, it is pleasing to note, have been well attended and much appreciated.

RICHMOND (SURREY) PUBLIC LIBRARY: Twenty-fourth Annual Report, 1904-5.—Stock, 32,066 volumes; issues, 96,167, a decrease of 6,404 volumes as compared with the same period last year, which is explained by the fact that the Library was closed for 15 days more than usual for re-decoration. The Library being too small to meet the demands now made upon it, the Council have purchased some freehold property adjoining for extension.

WISCONSIN LIBRARY BULLETIN, issued by the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, June, 1905.—Contents: Library Legislation for Wisconsin; Children's books in inexpensive editions: the Library Summer School; Question box; Notes for librarians; Methods for keeping books clean; Wisconsin Library Association.

T. G.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Bath.—Mr. Carnegie has offered £13,000 to Bath for public libraries.

Bethnal Green Free Library.—A meeting to commemorate the twenty-ninth anniversary of this institution was held at the Library on July 6th under the presidency of the Mayor of Bethnal Green (Mr. Councillor Charles Wood, J.P.). The report stated that the institution continued to flourish in its several departments. The income for the year was

£1,652 12s. 9d., the expenditure £1,585 1s. 5d., leaving a balance in hand of £67 11s. 4d. Among the contributions received was one of one shilling from a working-man, who wrote:—"Please accept P.O. for one shilling. I wish I could afford more for your noble work; but I am in very humble circumstances, with a very small income, but still with a very pleasant memory of the neighbourhood of your library, for it is near the spot where I spent many happy and careless hours over fifty-five years ago, when I was a poor boy working for a shilling and twopence a week with the Spitalfields weavers, working from 7 a.m. till 8 p.m., Saturdays included. There were no free libraries then, no Factory Act, no School Board, but it was work, boys, work and be contented."

Caversham.—Mr. Carnegie has offered £2,500 for the purpose of a public library.

Crosby.—The new Public Library, which has been erected at a cost of £5,600, was opened on June 23rd.

Glasgow (Mitchell Library).—The design for the new Mitchell Library has been selected. The principal frontage of the building will be to North Street. The style is Renaissance, based on English examples of the eighteenth century. The principal reading room, which will be on the ground floor, will measure about 120ft. by 50ft., and will be lighted entirely from the roof.

Hackney.—Mr. Henry D. Roberts has been unanimously appointed Consulting Librarian to the Borough Council, on the recommendation of the Libraries Committee.

Hammersmith.—The new library in Brook Green Road was opened on July 24th by His Grace the Duke of Argyll. We hope to present our readers with a description of this very handsome building at an early date.

Hove.—Designs are to be obtained for the new public library, the cost of which is not to exceed £10,000 (exclusive of furniture). Premiums are offered for the best designs.

Kensington.—After considerable discussion of a scheme adopted in February last for the erection of a new central library, the matter has been referred back to the Libraries Committee with an instruction to enquire as to the possibility of improving the existing accommodation to meet necessary requirements.

King's Norton.—Tenders are invited for the erection of a public library.

Liverpool.—Sir W. B. Forwood, Chairman of the Library, Museum and Arts Committee, opened the new branch library on June 27th. The library was built at a cost of £15,750, and is the gift of Mr. Carnegie.

Loughborough.—A new public library has just been opened at Loughborough. The building consists of a reading room, 40ft. square; lending library, 28ft. by 36ft., with accommodation for 10,000 volumes; and reference library, 25ft. by 19ft. Behind these are the librarian's office, stores, staff room, caretaker's room, lavatories, etc., the librarian's residence, which adjoins, having a separate entrance.

Northumberland and Durham Association of Library Assistants.—A meeting of this Association was held at the South Shields Public Library on July 12th, when the following papers were read and discussed: "The Objects and Kinds of Catalogues," by Mr. R. Burgess (South Shields); "The Dictionary Catalogue," by Mr. R. M. Daniel (South Shields); and "The Classified Catalogue," by Mr. James Ross (Newcastle-upon-Tyne).

Stepney.—Arrangements have now been made to utilise the site of the disused mortuary at Mile End for the purpose of enlarging the Mile End Library, the extension of which has been rendered possible by Mr. Carnegie's gift of £6,000.

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We have received from **Mr. J. Y. W. MacAlister, F.S.A.**, as a donation to the library of our Association, a copy of the History of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, written for the Centenary Festival, and containing chronicles of the Society compiled from the minute books, proceedings and transactions from 1805 to 1905. Mr. MacAlister, in a letter accompanying the book, hopes that it may be of interest to the users of the library "inasmuch as the Society was one of the foster-nurses of the Library Association, and had some share in its organisation." We feel sure that the book will be read with pleasure and delight by many members, and we appreciate this further token of Mr. MacAlister's kindly interest in the work of the Library Assistants' Association.

APPOINTMENTS.

BAKER, Mr. A. E., Sub-Librarian, Chester, to be Librarian, Taunton.

BARNES, Mr. W. E., Librarian, Lee Branch, Lewisham, to be Borough Librarian, Greenwich.

***SCOTT, Mr. J. C.** Assistant, Kendal, to be Sub-Librarian, Stockport.

UTTLEY, Mr. T. W., B.A., Victoria University, to be Assistant, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

* Member of the L.A.A.

ADDRESSES.

Chairman and Hon. Treasurer—**Mr. W. Geo. Chambers**, Public Library, Plumstead. (Telephone—45 Woolwich.)

Hon. Secretary—**Mr. Geo. E. Koebuck**, St. George's Library, 236, Cable Street, E.

Hon. Secretary Education Sub-Committee—**Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers**, Public Library, Croydon. (Telephone—394 Croydon.)

Hon. Librarian—**Mr. A. H. Carter** Public Library, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.